

Residential Student Assistance Program

Brief Description | Recognition | Program IOM | Intervention Type | Content Focus | Protective Factors
Risk Factors | Interventions by Domain | Key Program Approaches | Outcomes | Evaluation Design
Delivery Specifications | Intended Setting | Fidelity | Barriers and Problems | Personnel | Education
Personnel Training | Cost | Intended Age Group | Intended Population | Gender Focus
Replication Information | Contact Information

Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Residential Student Assistance Program is a substance abuse prevention program for high-risk adolescents, 14 to 17 years old, living in residential childcare facilities. Highly trained professionals, placed in residential facilities, provide residents with a full range of substance abuse prevention and early intervention services, including information dissemination, normative and preventive education, problem identification and referral, community-based intervention, and environmental approaches. Counselors work with adolescents both individually and in small groups, and these services are fully integrated into the adolescent's overall experience at the residential facility.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Residential Student Assistance Program (RSAP) began in 1987 as a 5-year demonstration program in Westchester County, NY, funded through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention High-Risk Youth Grant. The program model was based on employee assistance programs successfully used by industry to identify and aid employees whose work performance and lives had been adversely affected by substance abuse. Other experiences contributing to this program's design came from the county's successful implementation of the Westchester Student Assistance Programs within its high schools. This program intended to adapt that model for institutionalized adolescents at a very high risk for substance abuse. The residential facilities participating in the demonstration project included a locked county correctional facility, a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed adolescents, a nonsecure residential facility, and three foster care facilities.

RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

SELECTIVE, INDICATED

This program was developed for selective and indicated audiences.

It targets students with multiple risk factors and problems, including early substance use; parents who abuse substances; participation in violent or delinquent acts; histories of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse; chronic failure in school; and mental health problems, including attempted suicide.

INTERVENTION TYPE

TREATMENT

CONTENT FOCUS

ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, TOBACCO

The program targets general substance use and abuse, specifically tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY

INDIVIDUAL

- Self-efficacy and sense of mastery
- Social competence

FAMILY

- Distancing from chemically dependent parents
-

RISK FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY

INDIVIDUAL

- Juvenile justice and criminal involvement
- Severe emotional problems or mental disabilities
- Suicidal ideation

FAMILY

- Parental substance abuse
- Abuse and neglect

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY

INDIVIDUAL

- Institutional placement or individual counseling
- Life/social skills training

FAMILY

- Family therapy

PEER

- Classroom and peer support groups reinforcing unsupportive attitudes toward sexual permissiveness
- Peer-resistance training

SCHOOL

- Student Assistance Program, including teacher training, student programming, and school policy change

COMMUNITY

- Education to alter perceptions of societal norms and expectations
 - Multiagency activities and collaboration
-

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

COUNSELING, IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL, SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The program consists of four components that address the full range of substance abuse prevention and early intervention strategies that will help residents decrease their risk factors for substance abuse and increase their overall resiliency.

COUNSELING

After assessment, the counselor conducts a series of group counseling sessions. Residents are placed in one of five different groups based on their developmental differences, substance use patterns, and family history of substance abuse. Individual sessions are scheduled, as needed.

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA

The Prevention Education Series is a substance use prevention education program conducted by a student assistance counselor at the beginning of the intervention. It addresses four topics: (1) being an adolescent; (2) education about social and personal consequences and norms regarding substance use; (3) family problems and family pressures; and (4) resistance and social competency skills, including pressure, stress, problem solving, decisionmaking, coping, and resistance skills.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

Following the Prevention Education Series, the student assistance counselor assesses each student to determine his or her level of substance use, family substance abuse, and need for additional services. The counselor refers residents who require assistance to treatment, counseling that is more intensive, treatment services, or 12-Step groups. Counselor trains and consults with residential facility staff and coordinates the substance abuse services and policies of the facility.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The program addresses adolescent problem-solving, decisionmaking, coping, and resistance skills.

HOW IT WORKS

A partnership is established between a prevention agency and residential facility. An individual with a master's degree in social work, counseling, or psychology, who is experienced in adolescent substance abuse prevention counseling, is recruited to work in the facility as a Student Assistance Counselor (SAC). The SAC provides the facility with a full range of substance abuse prevention and early intervention services that will help residents decrease their risk factors for substance abuse and increase their overall resiliency. Program components include:

- **The Prevention Education Series**—The SAC conducts this eight-session substance use prevention education program.
- **Assessment**—Following the Prevention Education Series, residents are seen individually by the SAC to determine their level of substance use, family substance abuse, and need for additional services.
- **Individual and Group Counseling**—After assessment, the SAC conducts a series of 8 to 12 group-counseling sessions. Residents are placed in one of five different groups based on their developmental differences, substance use patterns, and family history of substance abuse. Individual sessions are scheduled as needed.
- **Referral & Consultation**—The SAC refers residents who require assistance to treatment, more intensive counseling, or 12-Step groups. Additionally, the SAC trains and consults with residential facility staff and coordinates the substance abuse services and policies of the facility.

RSAP requires the formation of a partnership between a prevention agency that will administer the program and a residential facility where it will operate. Specific staff involved in the partnership include:

- **Residential Facility Senior Executive**—This person establishes the initial implementation agreement, oversees the program, and appoints an RSAP liaison who will supervise the SAC and day-to-day program operations.
- **Executive Director/Project Director**—This person initiates and manages the program, sets up procedures, hires staff, and is responsible for direct program oversight.
- **Student Assistance Counselor (SAC)**—This person implements the program at the facility and provides all prevention and early intervention services to residents.
- **Project Supervisor**—This individual supervises the SAC.

These staff members must complete the following administrative steps to ensure successful program implementation:

- Define program goals and objectives
- Define target population
- Provide training and consultation for school staff
- Establish a school staff substance abuse task force
- Establish a school substance abuse task force
- Obtain technical assistance and training

A 75-page implementation manual, which includes resource material for professionals and worksheets for students, and a video are available. Onsite and offsite training of varying lengths, up to 5 days, also is available.

OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

For youth who reported using substances at the pretest, their posttest reports of use in the past 30 days showed:

- 72% reported no longer using alcohol
- 59% reported no longer using marijuana
- 27% reported no longer using tobacco
- 68% decrease in overall substance use

For youth not reporting use at pretest, data regarding 30-day use at posttest revealed:

- 82% remained nonusers of alcohol
- 83% remained nonusers of marijuana
- 78% remained nonusers of tobacco

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Teaches adolescents important resistance and social competency skills, including:

- Communication
- Decisionmaking
- Stress and anger management
- Problem solving
- Resisting peer pressure

EVALUATION DESIGN

A pretest and posttest nonequivalent comparison group design was used with a total sample of 326 adolescents. Approximately 125 residents participated in RSAP, while the others served as internal and external comparison groups. The internal comparison group was composed of youth from the residential facility that chose not to participate in RSAP. The external comparison group was made up of youth from another residential facility that did not have RSAP. All participants were required to participate in a pretest and posttest assessment. Assessment instruments included a shortened version of the *Monitoring the Future Questionnaire*, the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Test*, and the *Global Assessment of Functioning*. In addition, the Community Oriented Program Environment Scales were used to measure the residents' and staffs' perception of the site environment.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

5–24 WEEKS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

Prevention Education Series consists of eight weekly sessions. Group counseling consists of 8 to 12 weekly sessions.

INTENDED SETTING

URBAN

Developed for use in adolescent residential childcare facilities where youth from urban settings are placed either voluntarily or involuntarily.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

There must be a partnership between a prevention agency that will administer the program and the residential facility.

Staffing must include a residential facility senior executive, a project director, student assistance counselor, and someone to supervise the counselor.

The following administrative tasks must be completed:

- Define program goals and objectives
- Define target population
- Provide training and consultation for residential facility school staff
- Establish a school staff substance abuse task force
- Establish a school substance abuse task force
- Obtain training and technical assistance

PERSONNEL

FULL TIME, PART TIME

Types of positions needed to successfully implement this Model Program:

The residential facility senior executive establishes the initial implementation agreement, oversees the program, and appoints a facility liaison who will supervise the student assistance counselor and day-to-day program operations.

Project director initiates and manages the program, sets up procedures, hires staff, and is responsible for direct program oversight.

Student assistance counselor implements the program at the facility and provides all prevention and early intervention services to the residents.

Project supervisor supervises the student assistance counselor.

EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this Model Program per residential facility, as recommended by the developer:

TRAINING (at Westchester, NY, site)

5-day package \$375 plus travel costs
(including the manual and video)

Training cost per person per day \$80 plus travel costs
(including manual and video)

TRAINING (onsite)

Optional length, unlimited number of participants,
plus trainer travel costs \$500–\$1,000

Individualized technical assistance available by
phone or in person Costs vary

MATERIALS

Implementation Manual \$125 (includes postage)

Video \$20 (includes postage)

INTENDED AGE GROUP

EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (15–17)

Developed for use with adolescents 14 to 17 years old.

INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO

RSAP was tested with 14- to 17-year-old adolescents, primarily African American and Hispanic/Latino, living in various residential facilities. Whether voluntarily or involuntarily placed in such facilities, these youth typically present with multiple risk factors and problems, including early substance use; parents who abuse substances; participation in violent or delinquent acts; histories of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse; chronic failure in school; and mental health problems, including attempted suicide.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

Developed for use with both males and females.

REPLICATION INFORMATION

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

The developer is Student Assistance Services Corporation, of Tarrytown, NY.

Student Assistance Services (SAS) Corporation of Tarrytown, NY, developed RSAP. SAS is a private, nonprofit, community-based substance abuse prevention organization. It was formed in 1985 when its core program, the Student Assistance Program, spun off from the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, which had operated it since 1979.

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT

Ellen R. Morehouse, ACSWS, CASAC, CPP
Student Assistance Services Corporation
660 White Plains Road
Tarrytown, NY 10590
Phone: (914) 332-1300
Fax: (914) 366-8826
E-mail: sascorp@aol.com
Web site: www.sascorp.org